

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 2855

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, IS, XF
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER BADRAN REACTION TO AREA DEVELOPMENTS

1. PRIME MINISTER CALLED ME IN MORNING MAY 19 TO DISCUSS AREA DEVELOPMENTS BUT PRINCIPALLY ISRAELI ELECTION RESULTS.

2. HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. SOME IN THE AREA FEARED THAT ISRAEL WAS IN PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A SOUTH AFRICAN MENTALITY IN TERMS OF ISOLATION AND STUBBORNESS. HE DID NOT BELIEVE SO, BUT HE COULD SEE THE BEGINNING OF SUCH A PROCESS.

B. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THE ISRAELIS UNDER A LIKUD GOVERNMENT WOULD BEGIN TO PUSH PALESTINIANS OUT OF THE WEST BANK AND INTO JORDAN THROUGH A COMBINATION OF SUBTLE AND DIRECT PRESSURE. THIS WORRIED JORDAN.

C. HE WAS ALSO CONCERNED THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD PUSH EVEN MORE STRONGLY THAN THEY HAD THE QUESTION OF EXPANDING THEIR SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. BADRAN WAS OF COURSE FAMILIAR WITH BEGIN'S REPORTED COMMENTS THAT GAZA AND JUDEA

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AND SAMARIA WERE "LIBERATED TERRITORIES" AND PART OF ISRAEL, NOT OCCUPIED LAND.

3. BADRAN ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR THE ARABS TO CONTINUE THEIR PRESENT POSTURE OF FLEXIBILITY. HE NOTED THAT THE ELECTION SHOULD HELP TO CONVINCE THE US AND OTHERS THAT WHAT JORDAN (AND PARTICULARLY THE KING) HAD FEARED FOR SOME TIME WAS

ACTUALLY THE CASE -- THE ISRAELIS DID NOT WANT AND WERE NOT READY FOR GENUINE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. BADRAN EXPANDED FURTHER ON HIS CONCERN ABOUT WHAT HE CALLED THE "SOUTH AFRICANIZATION" OF ISRAEL. HE NOTED THAT A HARD LINE ISRAEL MIGHT MAKE THE US SEE MORE CLEARLY WHAT IT HAD TO DO IN THE AREA AND MIGHT MAKE IT MORE EASY FOR THE PRESIDENT TO GAIN SUPPORT IN THE US IN BRINGING PRESSURE ON ISRAEL BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT INTRODUCED A MAVERICK GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL WHICH MIGHT WELL END UP OUT OF CONTROL. HE WONDERED WHETHER THIS MIGHT MEAN THAT THE CONFRONTATION STATES WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER MORE REALISTICALLY THAN THEY HAD UP TO NOW THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME ISRAELI MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THEM. WE WENT OVER POSSIBLE ISRAELI GOVERNMENTAL COMBINATIONS. HE MENTIONED SHARON'S PARTY AS A POSSIBILITY FOR INCLUSION IN A LIKUD-NRP GOVERNMENT, AND ALLUDING TO THE POINT ABOUT POSSIBLE ISRAELI AGGRESSIVE TENDENCIES FOR THE FUTURE, NOTED THAT "WE ALL KNOW WHAT SAHRON STANDS FOR REGARDING JORDAN". HE DID NOT ASK FOR ANY ASSURANCES FROM US ON THESE POINTS AND I TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS MUCH TOO EARLY NOW TO REACH CONCLUSIONS. HOWEVER, HE IS OBVIOUSLY QUITE CONCERNED NOT ONLY ABOUT WHAT THE ELECTIONS MEAN FOR THE PEACE PROCESS, BUT ALSO FOR WHAT THEY MIGHT MEAN IN TERMS OF POSSIBLE CONFLICT IN THE AREA.

5. BADRAN SAID THAT ABDUL HALIM KHADDAM HAD BEEN HERE LAST NIGHT FROM SYRIA. KHADDAM REPORTED ON HIS OWN AND PRESIDENT ASAD'S CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN MUCH THE SAME TERMS AS THE KING HAD USED EARLIER TO DESCRIBE TO ME PRESIDENT ASAD' VIEWS. THE EMPHASIS WAS ON THE STRONG DEGREE OF TRUST WHICH THE
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SYRIANS SEEM TO BELIEVE HAS BEEN BUILT UP BY THE TWO MEETINGS - TRUST ON THE PERSONAL LEVEL. THEY ALSO INDICATED THAT THEY THOUGHT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS FOLLOWING THE CORRECT STRATEGY IN HIS APPROACH TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AND THAT THEY WERE NOT SURE WHETHER HE COULD OVERCOME ALL OF THE OBSTACLES BUT THAT THEY (THE SYRIANS) WERE CONVINCED ABOUT THE GENUINENESS OF HIS EFFORTS.

6. I ASKED BADRAN ABOUT KHADDAM'S VIEWS ON THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS. KHADDAM SAID THE ISRAELIS ARE THE ISRAELIS WHETHER THEY ARE LIKUD OR LABOR. WHAT THE ELECTIONS WILL DO IS SHOW THE US SOMETHING MORE ABOUT THE GENUINE INTENTIONS OF THE ISRAELIS. KHADDAM ADDED THAT HE AGREED WITH THE JORDANIANS THAT NOW WAS NOT THE TIME FOR THE ARABS TO OVERREACT OR TO DROP THEIR GENERAL CURRENT APPROACH TO THE ISSUE OF PEACE.

7. I ALSO ASKED ABOUT THE RECENT TRIP OF ABDUL HAMID SHARAF TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. IN EGYPT, BADRAN REPORTED THAT TALKS WITH SADAT HAD GONE WELL AND THAT THERE WAS A SENSE ON BOTH SIDES (EGYPT AND JORDAN) THAT THE SAME IDEAS AND POSITIONS HAD

BEEN RAISED WITH THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT. IN SAUDI ARABIA, CROWN PRINCE FAHD HAD RESPONDED TO MOST OF WHAT SHARAF HAD TO SAY IN TERMS ANALAGOUS TO THE JORDANIAN POSITION. HOWEVER, BADRAN INDICATED THAT FAHD HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY TOUGH ON NORMALIZATION MEASURES. HE SAID CLEARLY THAT THE SAUDIS DO NOT WANT TO OPEN THE FLOOD GATE TO ISRAELI BUSINESS MEN IN SAUDI ARABIA THE MOMENT PEACE IS DECLARED. FAHD WAS RATHER TOUGH ON THIS POINT. JORDAN STILL TAKES THE VIEW, BADRAN SAID, THAT SUCH RELATIONS WILL GROW UP NORMALLY AS A RESULT OF THE PEACE PROCESS AND OF MANY THINGS WHICH JORDAN WANTS-- AIR ROUTES DIRECTLY TO THE MEDITERRANEAN, USE OF A GAZA-WEST BANK CORRIDOR AND SO FORTH. SHARAF HAS JUST CALLED ME AND TOLD ME THAT FAHD WILL OF COURSE ALSO BE SPENDING A GOOD BIT OF HIS TIME ON ENERGY AND HARDWARE ISSUES AS WELL AS RESTATING HIS GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THE LINE PURSUED BY THE OTHER ARAB LEADERS ON THE PEACE.

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